

Because this group is an existing committee that includes representatives of the Federal land management agencies, the MSHCP IMC also serves as the MSHCP Development Subgroup using the applicable criteria in Appendix F and forwarding their recommendations to the Partners Working Group.

Notwithstanding the critical role of the MSHCP IMC, the administrative document, which controls the BLM's cooperative effort with Clark County for the development of the MSHCP, is a five-year assistance agreement executed with Clark County. This document requires that Clark County take certain responsibilities for overseeing contractors and assuring satisfactory completion of contracts funded for development of the MSHCP. This requirement is included in the minimum criteria for proposed MSHCP proposed development projects.

### ***Conservation Initiatives Subgroup***

The Conservation Initiatives Subgroup applies the criteria and ranking system listed in Appendix G to screen proposals and forward recommendations to the Partners Working Group related to conservation initiatives from the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, and other areas administered by the BLM in Clark County. The membership of the Conservation Initiatives Subgroup consists of:

- Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Las Vegas Field Office
- Superintendent, National Park Service, Lake Mead National Recreational Area
- Deputy Forest Supervisor, U.S. Forest Service, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest-Spring Mountains National Recreation Area
- Project Leader, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex

### **Resource Advisory Councils**

There are three Resource Advisory Councils (RACs) in Nevada: the Northeast Great Basin RAC, the Sierra Front Northwest Great Basin RAC, and the Mojave Southern Great Basin RAC. These RACs are composed of citizen advisors appointed by the Secretary of the Interior and are designed to have a balance of interests represented. They are sanctioned under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The RACs meet independently between 4 and 6 times a year and have one joint meeting per year. RAC meetings are open public meetings with published agendas and open public comment periods.

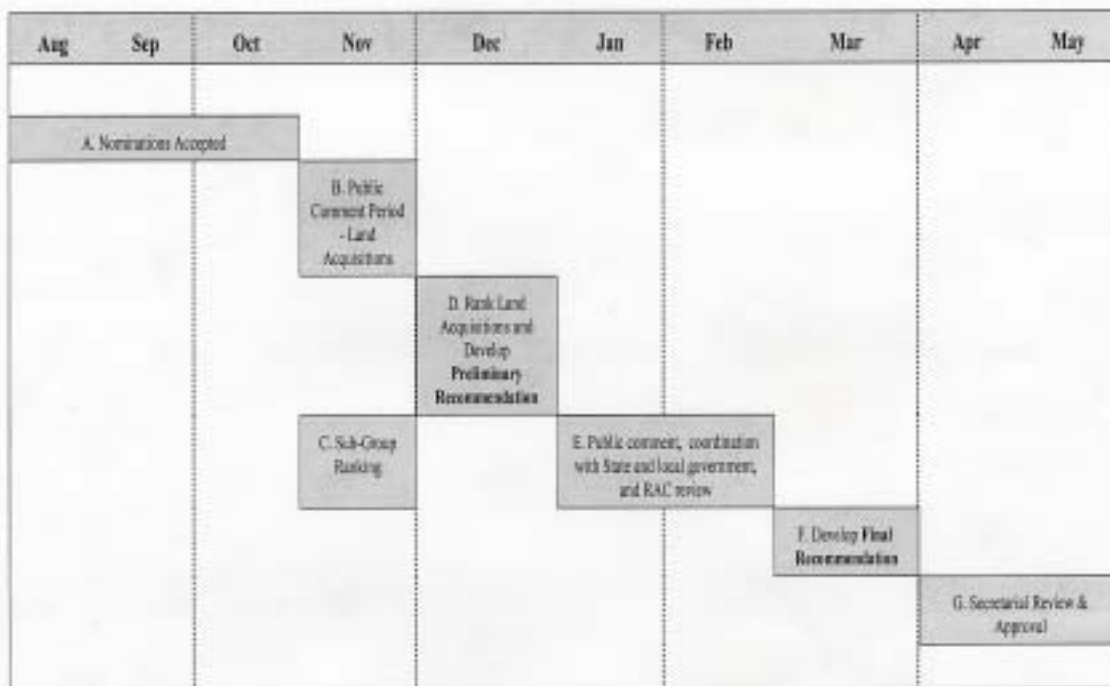
The BLM will supply information to the RACs, and provide them with the opportunity to offer advice on any aspect of the program. Individual RACs may choose to formulate a recommendation in advance of the joint meeting regarding the properties proposed for acquisition within their area of jurisdiction. Since certain of the allowable expenditures are for southern Nevada only, the Mojave Southern Great Basin RAC may offer recommendations regarding proposed parks, trails, and natural areas; conservation initiatives and development of a MSHCP for Clark County, as well as capital improvements at the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, the Red Rock Canyon National

Conservation Area and other areas administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Clark County, and the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Recommendation Development Process explains the steps involved in assembling a recommendation for the Secretary as to how the revenue in the Special Account would be spent with approval. This process includes the organizational entities described in Section III and provides several opportunities for any Federal, State or local governmental entities or other interested parties to participate. Figure 1 depicts the process and anticipated annual time-line. Each step in the process is then described in more detail.

Figure 1: RECOMMENDATION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



## **A. Nomination Period**

The Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Forest Service may receive funding for land acquisitions. Any entity or interested party may propose land and/or interest in land (such as conservation easements, water rights, mineral rights, etc.) for acquisition to an eligible entity.

Capital Improvement projects may be nominated by any of the four Federal land management agencies (BLM, FWS, FS, and NPS). Parks, Trails, and Natural Area projects may be nominated by a unit of local government (Clark County, the City of Las Vegas, the City of North Las Vegas, or the City of Henderson) as well as by a regional government entity (Southern Nevada Water Authority, the Regional Flood Control District or the Clark County Sanitation District) providing the entity has entered into a Cooperative Agreement as specified in the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (P.L. 105-263). MSHCP Development projects may be nominated by Clark County, BLM, FWS, FS, or NPS. Conservation Initiative projects may be nominated by any entity, but the nomination must be sponsored by one or more of the four Federal land management agencies.

Nominations will be accepted by the BLM Las Vegas Field Office Division of Land Sales and Acquisitions. Nomination packages must include all required documentation as outlined in the appropriate “nomination package requirements” document provided by the Las Vegas Field Office Division of Land Sales and Acquisitions. The BLM – Las Vegas Field Office Division of Land Sales and Acquisitions will review the nomination packages for completeness. Time permitting, nominators will be notified regarding incomplete packages and given an opportunity to supply missing information. Packages that remain incomplete cannot be considered. Complete packages for Capital Improvements, Park, Trail and Natural Area Projects; Conservation Initiatives, and for development of an MSHCP are forwarded to the respective subgroup for ranking. The BLM – Las Vegas Field Office Division of Land Sales and Acquisitions will (a) make the land acquisition nominations public for a 30-day comment period, (b) send a summary of the relevant land nominations to the affected counties in Nevada, and (c) forward the land nominations to the Partners Working Group.

## **B. Public Comment: Lands and/or Interest in Lands Nominated for Acquisition**

During the 30 days following the public release of the list of lands and/or interest in lands nominated for acquisition, the Federal agencies, the State of Nevada, any local government statewide, and any interested party may submit comments. This opportunity is meant to satisfy, in part, the consultation requirement in the SNPLMA, which states that:

*“Before initiating efforts to acquire land...the Secretary [of the Interior] or the Secretary of Agriculture shall consult with the State of Nevada and with local governments within whose jurisdiction the lands are located, including appropriate planning and regulatory agencies, and with other interested persons, concerning the necessity of making the acquisition, the potential impacts on State and local government, and other appropriate aspects of the acquisition.”*

All comments will be forwarded to the Partners Working Group for consideration in scoring and ranking the nominations.

## **C. Ranking Nominations**

### **Ranking Nominations for Land and/or Interest in Land Acquisitions**

The Partners Working Group will apply the criteria in this Implementation Agreement (Appendix C) to score and rank nominations for land and/or interest in land acquisitions. The Partners Working Group will take into consideration the public comments received during the 30 days following the public release of the lands nominations as well as all information provided in the nomination packages.

### **Ranking Nominations for Capital Improvements**

The Capital Improvements Subgroup will apply the criteria in this Implementation Agreement (Appendix D) to screen and rank proposals for capital improvements at the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, the Spring Mountain National Recreation Area, the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, and other areas administered by the BLM in Clark County. The Partners Working Group will review the subgroup's recommendations and rationale during the development of their Preliminary Recommendation to the Executive Committee. All projects regardless of ranking shall be submitted to the Partners Working Group.

### **Ranking Nominations for Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas**

The Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas Subgroup will apply this criteria in the Implementation Agreement (Appendix E) to screen proposals and forward recommendations to the Partners Working Group related to the development of parks, trails, and natural areas in Clark County pursuant to a cooperative agreement with a unit of local government. The recommendation shall include a list of projects recommended for funding, and a separate list of any projects, along with the rationale, which are not being recommended

### **Ranking Nominations for Development of a Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan**

The MSHCP Development Subgroup will assemble a recommendation of MSHCP Development Projects in priority order using the criteria and requirements listed in Appendix F. The Partners Working Group will review the Subgroup's recommendations and rationale during the development of their Preliminary Recommendations to the Executive Committee. All projects regardless of ranking shall be submitted to the Partners Working Group.

### **Ranking Nominations for Conservation Initiatives**

The Conservation Initiatives Subgroup will apply the criteria in this Implementation Agreement (Appendix G) to screen and rank proposals for conservation initiatives from the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, the Spring Mountains National

Recreation Area, the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, and other areas administered by the BLM in Clark County. All projects regardless of ranking shall be submitted to the Partners Working Group.

#### **D. Assembly of a Preliminary Recommendation Package**

The Partners Working Group will develop a Preliminary Recommendation Package for the Executive Committee that includes, but is not limited to: 1) funding levels for all of the SNPLMA expenditure categories, taking into account the projected balance of the Special Account; 2) a prioritized list of properties for land acquisition; and 3) a finding of support, or recommended modifications to the priority list, for projects submitted from the Subgroups for Capital Improvements; Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas; MSHCP Development and Conservation Initiatives. The Partners Working Group may also elect to submit recommendations to the Executive Committee at this time for changes to the SNPLMA Implementation Agreement and changes to other operational and financial procedures.

#### **E. Public Review of the Preliminary Recommendation Package**

The Preliminary Recommendation is made public for a 30- to 60-day comment period. It is also sent under formal letterhead to the State and to every County in Nevada. This opportunity for comment is meant to satisfy, in part, the requirement in the Act that:

*“The Secretary [of the Interior] shall coordinate the use of the special account with the Secretary of Agriculture, the State of Nevada, local governments, and other interested persons, to ensure accountability and demonstrated results.”*

#### **F. Development of the Final Recommendation**

The Executive Committee considers the recommendations of the Partners Working Group and the comments received during the public comment period, and then assembles a Final Recommendation. The Final Recommendation specifies the land and/or interest in land recommended for acquisition and the projects recommended under the other expenditure categories, providing a maximum budget for each category based upon the estimated costs and allowable expenses. The Final Recommendation is transmitted to the Secretary.

#### **G. Secretarial Review and Approval**

The Secretary makes the final decision regarding expenditures under the Act. The Secretary’s decision consists of a list, in priority order, of acquisitions and projects for each category of allowable expenditure and a budget figure for each category. Because the allocation of funds is based on estimated costs, it is expected that actual costs will vary. In order to ensure that funds are available to complete acquisitions and projects, funding will be reserved using the acquisition or project estimated cost plus 10%. Any unspent balance will be available for the next priority acquisition or project within each budget category.